

KENTUCKY EMERGENCY VEHICLE STATUTES (KRS 189.910 -.950)

**This summary does not include all statutes in the relevant section. Please see
www.lrc.ky.gov for full statutes.**

189.910 Definitions for KRS 189.920 to 189.950.

(1) As used in KRS 189.920 to 189.950, "emergency vehicle" means any vehicle used for emergency purposes by:

- (a) The Department of Kentucky State Police;
- (b) A public police department;
- (c) The Department of Corrections;
- (d) A sheriff's office; (e) A rescue squad;
- (f) An emergency management agency if it is a publicly owned vehicle;
- (g) An ambulance service or medical first-response provider licensed by the Kentucky Board of Emergency Medical Services, for any vehicle used to respond to emergencies or to transport a patient with a critical medical condition;
- (h) Any vehicle commandeered by a police officer;
- (i) Any vehicle with the emergency lights required under KRS 189.920 used by a paid or volunteer fireman or paid or volunteer ambulance personnel, or a paid or local emergency management director while responding to an emergency or to a location where an emergency vehicle is on emergency call;
- (j) An elected coroner granted permission to equip a publicly or privately owned motor vehicle with lights and siren pursuant to KRS 189.920; or
- (k) A deputy coroner granted permission to equip a publicly or privately owned motor vehicle with lights and siren pursuant to KRS 189.920.

(2) As used in KRS 189.920 to 189.950, "public safety vehicle" means public utility repair vehicle; wreckers; state, county, or municipal service vehicles and equipment; highway equipment which performs work that requires stopping and standing or moving at slow speeds within the traveled portions of highways; and vehicles which are escorting wide-load or slow-moving trailers or trucks.

189.930 Right-of-way to emergency vehicles -- Blocking or following emergency vehicles -- Driving over unprotected hoses of fire department.

(1) Upon the approach of an emergency vehicle equipped with, and operating, one (1) or more flashing, rotating, or oscillating red or blue lights, visible under normal conditions from a distance of five hundred (500) feet to the front of such vehicle; or the driver is given audible signal by siren, exhaust whistle, or bell, the driver of every other vehicle shall yield the right-of-way, immediately drive to a position parallel to, and as close as possible to, the edge or curb of the highway clear of any intersection, and stop and remain in such position until the emergency vehicle has passed, except when otherwise directed by a police officer or firefighter.

(2) Upon the approach of any emergency vehicle, operated in conformity with the provisions of subsection (1) of this section, the operator of every vehicle shall immediately stop clear of any intersection and shall keep such position until the emergency vehicle has passed, unless directed otherwise by a police officer or firefighter.

(3) No operator of any vehicle, unless he is on official business, shall follow any emergency vehicle being operated in conformity with the provisions of subsection (1) of this section closer than five hundred (500) feet, nor shall he drive into, or park the vehicle into, or park the vehicle within, the block where the vehicle has stopped in answer to an emergency call or alarm unless he is directed otherwise by a police officer or firefighter.

(4) No vehicle, train, or other equipment shall be driven over any unprotected hose of a fire department when the hose is laid down on any street, private driveway, or track for use at any fire or fire alarm unless the fire department official in command consents that the hose be driven over.

(5) Upon approaching a stationary emergency vehicle or public safety vehicle, when the emergency vehicle or public safety vehicle is giving a signal by displaying alternately flashing yellow, red, red and white, red and blue, or blue lights, a person who drives an approaching vehicle shall, while proceeding with due caution: (a) Yield the right-of-way by moving to a lane not adjacent to that of the authorized emergency vehicle, if: 1. The person is

driving on a highway having at least four (4) lanes with not fewer than two (2) lanes proceeding in the same direction as the approaching vehicle; and 2. If it is possible to make the lane change with due regard to safety and traffic conditions; or (b) Reduce the speed of the vehicle, maintaining a safe speed to road conditions, if changing lanes would be impossible or unsafe. (6) This section does not operate to relieve the person who drives an emergency vehicle from the duty to operate the vehicle with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highway.

189.940 Exemptions from traffic regulations.

(1) Except as provided in KRS 189.920, the speed limitations set forth in the Kentucky Revised Statutes do not apply to emergency vehicles:

- (a) When responding to emergency calls; or
- (b) To police vehicles when in pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law; or
- (c) To ambulances when transporting a patient to medical care facilities; and
- (d) The driver thereof is giving the warning required by subsection (5)(a) and (b) of this section.

No portion of this subsection shall be construed to relieve the driver of the duty to operate the vehicle with due regard for the safety of all persons using the street or highway.

(2) The driver of an emergency vehicle, when responding to an emergency call, or of a police vehicle in pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law, or of an ambulance transporting a patient to a medical care facility and giving the warning required by subsection (5) of this section, upon approaching any red light or stop signal or any stop sign shall slow down as necessary for safety to traffic, but may proceed past such red or stop light or stop sign with due regard for the safety of persons using the street or highway.

(3) The driver of an emergency vehicle, when responding to an emergency call, or of a police vehicle in pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law, or of an ambulance transporting a patient to a medical care facility and giving warning required by subsection (5) of this section, may drive on the left side of any highway or in the opposite direction of a one-way street provided the normal lanes of traffic are blocked and he does so with due regard for the safety of all persons using the street or highway.

(4) The driver of an emergency or public safety vehicle may stop or park his vehicle upon any street or highway without regard to the provisions of KRS 189.390 and 189.450, provided that, during the time the vehicle is parked at the scene of an emergency, at least one (1) warning light is in operation at all times.

(5) The driver of an emergency vehicle desiring the use of any option granted by subsections (1) through (3) of this section shall give warning in the following manner:

- (a) By illuminating the vehicle's warning lights continuously during the period of the emergency; and
- (b) By continuous sounding of the vehicle's siren, bell, or exhaust whistle; unless
- (c) The vehicle is an ambulance and the driver is of the opinion that sounding of the siren, bell, or exhaust whistle would be detrimental to the victim's health.

In the event the driver of an ambulance elects not to use the siren, bell, or exhaust whistle he shall not proceed past red lights or drive in the opposite direction on a one-way street or in oncoming lanes of traffic unless no other vehicles are within five hundred (500) feet of the front of the ambulance. The driver shall not extinguish the warning lights during the period of the emergency.

(6) No driver or operator of any emergency or public safety or other vehicle shall use the warning lights or siren, bell, or exhaust whistle of his vehicle for any purposes or under any circumstances other than those permitted by KRS 189.910 to 189.950.

(7) KRS 189.910 to 189.950 does not relieve the driver of any emergency or public safety vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and property upon the highway.